R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 014 241 FL 000 398

UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE ABROAD (1957-61).

ANTIOCH COLL., YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO
REPORT NUMBER ACR-3 PUB DATE JAN 62
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 4P.

DESCRIPTORS- *STUDY ABROAD, *COLLEGE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, *PROGRAM EVALUATION, *STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, *WORK STUDY PROGRAMS, FOREIGN COUNTRIES, COLLEGE STUDENTS, UNDERGRADUATE STUDY, ANTIOCH COLLEGE, ANTIOCH EDUCATION ABROAD,

THIS IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF REPORTS FROM ANTIOCH COLLEGE ON EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS AND RESEARCH. IT DESCRIBES THE ANTIOCH EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAM, BEGUN IN 1957-58 UNDER A 3-YEAR GRANT (LATER EXTENDED TO FOUR YEARS) FROM THE FUND FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION, AS AN EXPERIMENT IN ATTEMPTING TO EXTEND THE INTERNATIONALLY CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF ITS HOME PROGRAM--(1) COMBINED CLASSROOM AND JOB EXPERIENCE, (2) INDIVIDUALLY TAILORED STUDENT PROGRAMS THAT USED BOTH GROUP EXPERIENCE AND INDEPENDENT STUDY, AND (3) THE PRINCIPLE OF THE COOPERATIVE PLAN, THAT A STUDENT OFF CAMPUS BE REPLACED BY ONE ON CAMPUS, TO MAKE THE PROGRAM SELF-SUPPORTING. THE REPORT DESCRIBES HOW THE PROGRAM NOW OPERATES, HOW THE ORIGINAL ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH IT WAS BASED HAVE BEEN TESTED IN PRACTICE, AND HOW THE PROGRAM HAS CHANGED AND DEVELOPED IN CONSEQUENCE. (AUTHOR)

ED014241

ANTIOCH COLLEGE REPORTS

Published by the Office of Educational Research, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio (January, 1962)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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3 Undergraduate Experience Abroad (1957-61)[1]

"These seven principles for a program of international education . . . diversity, breadth of approach, maintenance of high standards, flexibility, financial feasibility, continuity, and thorough interpretation—here are guideposts . . . toward the achievement of the most elusive, yet most necessary goals of man. Mutual understanding and compassion on the part of each individual, leading to a world peace buttressed not only by international law but by true largeness of heart—here are the goals . . . worthy of our most strenuous efforts."[2]

This is the third in a series of reports from Antioch College on educational experiments and research. Antioch Education Abroad, begun in 1957-58 under a three-year grant (later extended to four years) from the Fund for the Advancement of Education, was experimental in attempting to extend internationally characteristic features of its home program: combined classroom and job experience; individually tailored student programs that used both group experience and independent study; and the principle of the co-operative plan, that a student off campus be replaced by one on campus, to make the program self-supporting. This report describes how the program now operates, how the original assumptions on which it was based have been tested in practice, and how the program has changed and developed in consequence.

"Diversity, Breadth of Approach, Flexibility"

Late-June departures of 60 Antioch students on student ships to Europe marked the opening of the new Antioch Education Abroad (AEA) year of 1961-62, a year in which an estimated 180 students in all will participate in some phase of the program abroad. This number includes 35 from the 1960-61 group who continue to study or work abroad through the summer or fall before they resume campus programs. Of those newly departing, the majority will work at short-term jobs during university vacations, and will be based for most of the year at one of the Antioch centers: the University of Besançon, France, the University of Tübingen, Germany, and Antioch's own program, run in co-operation with the University of Guanajuato, in Mexico. In Britain, Antiochians are scattered: Bangor, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Exeter, Leeds, London, Oxford, Southampton. Still others are participating in direct exchanges or other approved junior-year-abroad programs, or specialized art or music schools; a few have long-term teaching or other special-experience jobs, from Holland and Switzerland to Kenya. Every student's program has been individually planned through the year preceding his departure to fit into his Antioch degree requirements.

Every student, as is true on co-operative jobs at home, must report his address, his movements, any important information about his jobs and study. Most students begin the year abroad with short-term jobs for acculturation and language practice, or with language refresher courses followed by jobs. Cards with exotic stamps pour into the campus AEA office by every mail: La Miquelette, Vidauban; Slotsherrenvej 21, Vanløse; Indelicato, Via Castel Morrone 2, Milano; High Street, Sevenoaks, Kent; 90 Sven Sollid, Sulitjelma; Erziehungsheim, Tempelhof über Crailsheim; Kastel Eerde, Ommen, Overijssel. Here are sample remarks:

"Hurrah! Je suis ici. C'est incroyable, merveilleux!"

"This atmosphere . . . makes the work not only bearable but rewarding. The joy, patience, love directed towards these very old sick women are something one must experience to understand . . . working is exhausting and sometimes frustrating to the point of tears."

"Two ducks just landed in the moat . . . the INNER moat—because we have TWO—a more impressive status symbol than two TV's. . . . I live in a very delightful small room up in the attic of this castle . . . a sink . . . that runs only cold water . . . and there were two vases of fresh flowers for me when I came."

By mid-November the first jobs, travel, and intensive language courses are over. A more or less permanent list gives addresses for the 66 students settled into European universities, the 14 on long-term jobs, and the 19 registered for the fall quarter in Guanajuato. But the flow never entirely ceases, because the home-campus quarterly alternation system itself necessitates movement. A new group will be in Mexico in the winter, another in the spring. A few students will leave for Europe or Latin America in January. In March the German university students will have a two-month work

[1]This program is under the direction of Esther A. Oldt, Director of Antioch Education Abroad. Research studies were carried out by Ruth Churchill, College Examiner, assisted by Paula John, Assistant to the College Examiner, Mary Carol Judy, Research Assistant, E. Gwen Gardner, Dir., Antioch in Europe, John Cobb, Dir., Antioch in Mexico.

[2]Speech by Samuel B. Gould, former President of Antioch College, to the Seventh Annual Conference on Student Travel, 1956.

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period before their summer semester begins in May. In April the first 60 or 70 of AEA students for the next year will have completed their winter quarter of campus study, and will be free to go abroad to jobs or language practice in preparation for the following university year. About half of these will choose to do so; the other half will work in the United States before they sail.

At home, planning, packing, reading, study, language tables are the business of the preparatory months for students and staff. Abroad, resident directors, three in Europe and two in Mexico, ably assist students to take necessary steps toward independence and self-direction, make official arrangements with universities and employers, and see that examination results, interview notes, and employer ratings are sent to the home office for interpreting for credits.

Thus the cycle continues. The flow of letters continues: letters of routine business and of human emotion, from excitement to disillusionment, anger to happiness, fear to fulfillment; evidence of work done, academic and extramural, usually successfully, sometimes poorly. All are symbols and records of an educational program in action.

"Guideposts Toward Achievement"

Planning and preparation for AEA extended over two years before the first students left in the spring of 1957. The program owed much to many individuals, on and off campus—faculty members, alumni, students, trustees, and other friends. Such organizations as the American Friends Service Committee, the Institute of International Education, the Council on Student Travel, the Experiment in International Living, many international placement and exchange agencies, and previous junior-year-abroad programs gave generous assistance and advice.

Antioch's program was to differ from its forerunners in the experimental approach already described. Assumptions on which operation was based are briefly as follows:

1. That the College could develop a calendar necessarily different from that of the home campus, a workable scheme of combined study, jobs, travel, and family living abroad that could be fitted into the regular five-year college curriculum for any student in good standing.

2. That despite differences in educational systems and emphases, university study abroad could be primarily an enrichment of Antioch's general education program, yet afford excellent opportunity for specialization for any unusually well-prepared student.

3. That students in other than English-language universities could attain sufficient language preparation to study at a level high enough to satisfy them and their professors.

4. That students, through previous experience on the co-operative plan, would have attained sufficient maturity, self-reliance, and adaptability to adjust well to other cultures.

5. That the program would be financially feasible both for the College and the student by adapting the replacement principle of the alternating student body on the co-operative plan: that is, that the College could increase total enrollment without enlarging campus population and facilities, and that the student's tuition could be used for the education abroad costs so total expense would be no more than a year at home.

"Our Most Strenuous Efforts"

The operations, staff, and program described did not spring complete and fully organized from the original design. In order to operate at minimum expense, the plan was to utilize faculty members on sabbatical leave as directors of the European programs, with assistance from student group leaders at each center, until enrollment became large enough to justify full-time continuing staff abroad. It was expected that enrollments would double each year, and that the resulting tuition income would support necessary staff increases.

However, two very practical developments shook these plans the very first year. First, students in Europe, especially in France, encountered personal and social difficulties that neither the resident student leader nor the part-time faculty member, both inexperienced in the European cultural milieu, was prepared to deal with successfully: difficulties in adjusting to language and cultural strains, and unwitting violations of social codes for which American campus codes were inadequate preparation for understanding or remedial action. Academic programs, for those able to handle the language demands, went well; but social encounters, especially with French students, were difficult to arrange.

These developments showed the need for much more assistance at a professional level at every stage of the year abroad. A full-time European director was added to the AEA staff that spring. Her first tasks were to straighten out misunderstandings with the French university and community, to assist students at the end of the year with crediting and examining problems, and to lay foundations for the following year. One of the most successful participants in the French program, a senior, was added to the staff as a resident assistant just after her graduation.

In Germany, the study-center at the University of Tübingen had, from its beginning, a part-time resident director experienced both in German and American student ways.

The lessons of the first year made it possible to strengthen orientation to social aspects of the Latin countries, not only in Europe but also in the newly instituted Mexican program, which had its own resident directors experienced in both cultures to work with students and Mexican university professors. (Unlike the European programs, the Mexican venture, though taught entirely in Spanish with community experience and family living as important factors as the classroom itself, is operated by Antioch as a direct substitute for a campus quarter.)

The second unexpected problem was a much slower rate of increase in enrollments than anticipated, along with a tendency toward short-term rather than year-long programs. Budgetary difficulties were a consequence, since financing depended on full annual tuition from a majority of enrolled

AEA students to support both student and College AEA costs. (Again, the Mexico program is an exception; though it is short-term, tuition for a regular and predictable number of students per quarter can be allocated to support administrative and teaching expenses.)

These and related problems that could have been discovered only in the course of actual operations led to revisions of the original plans and program during its third year.

"Financial Feasibility"

It was generally agreed that original estimates of the probable yearly increase of enrollments had been too high, and furthermore, that such rapid expansion was desirable neither educationally nor administratively. In spite of better preparation and better guidance abroad, continuing instances of student inability to handle independent study demands and to adjust to a new environment and language demonstrated that participants should be selected and screened even more carefully.

While this preliminary screening might tend to cut enrollments rather than to increase them, the program could be strengthened financially by limiting short-term programs—at the expense of some flexibility for individual students and teachers, some of whom, while granting the desirability of experience abroad, strongly preferred that their students do all academic work on the home campus. In 1959-60 it was agreed that in the future all short-term programs except in Mexico should be drastically curtailed. A few special exceptions would be allowed, especially for unusual job opportunities. The change-over has been gradual, but in 1961-62 there will be a marked decrease in short-term programs in Europe—only 4 out of the 75 students who went abroad in the summer and fall quarters, as contrasted with 21 out of 63 in 1958-59, had short-term programs.

With the deflection of this many full annual tuitions to the AEA budget, even with comparatively small over-all enrollment increases, the program will be able to support itself without subsidization beyond that required for college operations as a whole. In earlier years, only foundation support enabled the College to undertake the experiment.

For the individual student, incomplete reports indicate that a few programs abroad cost less than the campus year. Most are about the same, with generally lower living expenses offset by extra vacation-travel. A few students spend much more than they would at home. Students who depend on co-operative job savings to meet part of their college expenses find income drastically reduced on jobs abroad. In order to make it possible for such students to be included in AEA, the College has recently allocated a small scholarship fund in addition to its regular tuition reduction plan.

"Maintenance of High Standards"

A primary concern to the educational staff and serious students alike has been for the quality of achievement. This concern goes far beyond the difficulties encountered in the mechanics of interpreting study abroad in American quantitative credit terms. Interpretation is not simple, and probably cannot be; but a generally satisfactory formula has been worked out and has met with comparatively little criticism.

Qualitative measures of academic achievement have been chiefly those of examination and evaluation in institutions abroad. This in turn requires Antioch program directors abroad to arrange for special examining when suitable evaluative methods (examinations or tutorial reports) are not normally available. The student himself is responsible for organizing his study-year in relation to his Antioch course and, if he is on an independent program, for securing adequate external evidence of achievement in support of his own records. If evidence is unclear or conflicting, or casts doubt on the student's achievement, the home staff makes supplementary evaluations. The AEA office makes recommendations to the Antioch registrar on all work for general college requirements, and to the various college departments for major field credit or for co-operative job credits.

All work abroad is more predictable than in former years; students who entered college in 1958 or later have been able to plan their programs from the beginning to ensure necessary language skills and proper sequence of campus courses, as well as to check in advance whether their own major fields will accept work done abroad to meet graduation requirements. The experience and records of former students enable advisers to recommend certain courses and methods of study with the confidence that study abroad can be academically rewarding as well as personally exciting.

In general, Antioch students have had consistently high achievement abroad—in spite of a number of individual difficulties that have been described. There have been, in fact, some remarkable successes, not confined even in foreign language programs to those linguistically gifted. For example, one mathematics major who studied at Tübingen and had considerable difficulty with German his first semester there found mathematics courses so good and the teaching so stimulating that he took all the advanced mathematics he could get, even though he had planned to emphasize general studies abroad. He returned so competent in his field that his department advisers encouraged him to complete his last two Antioch years in one.

There have been equally dramatic instances of job successes abroad, some of which have not only been significant contributions to the organization concerned, but have changed a student's career planning. Yet it has been discovered that the co-operative jobs at home, while building toward competence and self-reliance, do not necessarily predict successful performance by students when abroad.

"Continuing and Thorough Interpretation"

Continuing research and evaluation of the AEA program were envisioned as integral to the program from the beginning. Early experiences intensified the conviction that im-

provement of techniques for selecting students to go abroad was imperative, and that increased knowledge was also necessary of the impact of the varying program experiences, both on the students themselves and on their relationship to other people in other cultures.

The first project undertaken was intensive interviews of Antioch students who had just returned from trips abroad of various lengths and purposes, most of which were not part of the formal college program just beginning. Results of these interviews are summarized in an article in the *Antioch Review* (Winter, 1958-59) and deal mainly with characteristics of education abroad desirable for our purposes. A second early project (unpublished, winter, 1958-59) involved participant observation of the Mexico program combined with student interviews, and convinced us of the desirability of this program. On the basis of these experiences, two further research projects were carried out.

1. A minor study concerned with preparation in foreign languages showed that students planning a long-term experience in Europe tended to have all the language training the home campus offered and to make large gains in reading and listening while abroad (conversational ability was not tested). Students planning short-term programs typically did not attempt to learn a language; those who did were poorly prepared and learned less abroad than they would have in an elementary language course. Participants in the short-term Mexican program were different: in the period spent there, equivalent to the length of a campus course, students learned more than they would have in an elementary language course. Also, the more Spanish students knew before they went, the more they learned there.

2. The major study undertaken concerned student feelings and attitudes toward, and knowledge of, Europe—particularly in contrast to the United States. The outstanding result was identification of the group who chose to go abroad as a group selected not only on such expected variables as scholastic ability and major field, but also on factors such as more initial knowledge of Europe, more unfavorable attitudes toward the U.S., and greater intellectual inclination. These students were compared, both before and after their AEA experience, with a group that did not go abroad. The group with AEA experience had changed in the direction of fewer unfavorable statements about the U.S. and fewer value judgments, while the students without AEA experience changed in the opposite direction. Both groups gained similarly in knowledge of Europe, and the group at home gained in the direction of greater intellectuality of attitudes. There is some evidence that short-term AEA experiences are associated with less learning about Europe and with no change in unfavorable attitudes toward the U.S. Interpretation here is difficult because of the smallness of the groups and the nature of change in attitudes. Continued study is indicated.

A new approach has been used in a study begun by the European director of cases of failures, defined as withdrawals, emotional breakdowns, or work or study for which no credit can be granted. A substantial drop in failures over the years seems related to improvements in planning and administration, to clearer communication with foreign universities, to better orientation, and to increased ability to give support to students abroad as it is needed.

"Mutual Understanding"

In summary, Antioch Education Abroad has proved feasible, both for individual students and for Antioch College as an institution; original assumptions have proved valid on the whole. Exceptions and modifications have already been discussed, and problems yet to be solved have been indicated.

One final dilemma should be pointed out, a financial one that not only Antioch, but every institution affiliated with universities abroad must recognize. The replacement principle has been both possible and practical. Yet many of the financial advantages in its present application depend upon highly subsidized, low-tuition universities in other countries that may have inadequate facilities for their own nationals. This situation presents both practical and ethical questions to any American college or university. Under what circumstances are we justified in placing our students in already crowded institutions? Can we, and should we, substitute reciprocal systems of inter-college and inter-university cooperation? Or are there other means of achieving the goals?

These questions remain to be solved. Many more have been only hinted at here. That the basic idea and ideal are sound we have no doubt. That they have impact on campus life, on the curriculum, on foreign language competence, and on exchanges and interchanges among students and faculty, there can be no question.

Most important is the evidence that the program can and often does succeed in its most vital objective, a contribution to international understanding and good will, and an opening of doors to many who never knew such doors existed. From India, where a student lived and worked in a forest village, a field supervisor wrote simply, "P. had become one of us. We shall remember him and miss him for a long time."

A student writes from abroad: "AEA students come home with a new outlook, a much greater awareness of the importance of politics, the international implications, the knowledge of the reasons for a lot of things they took for granted as good or bad before, and the new desire in most of them to DO something."

A reminder that others share our hope for mutual understanding beyond national boundaries comes from a university professor who writes, "I am very pleased to continue teaching at the Antioch center . . . because I am convinced that the best patriotic work for my own country is that which will help our nations to understand each other better."

NOTE: *Copies of a four-year report, to the Fund for the Advancement of Education, on Antioch Education Abroad, including information on its organization and operation, are available from the Office of Educational Research, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.*